

From: John Castelein
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/22/02 6:53pm
Subject: MS anti-trust case

Mz. Hesse,

I have received a mailing from a Microsoft sympathetic organization that pointed out that there is a public comment period and where I might send my thoughts to best be heard. My supervisor at work encouraged me to pitch in so I thought I'd put in a word from a person intimately familiar with the dynamics of the computing industry.

My view of this business' effects (over the last 20 years I've been associated with its products, primarily in a support role) is that it has admirably worked to create affordable products for mass consumption. I've used the resulting products and supported them for years and though I often wished they'd be of higher dependability and quality, they are flexible enough, powerful enough, and inexpensive enough to be made available widely and positively impact businesses, home computing users, and advanced computing as an efficiency tool worldwide.

I think its business practices have been rabidly capitalist (unnecessarily so), and damaging to firms involved with hardware, software, and even creativity in general. The techniques used by it have been seen before at least 100 years ago, and resulted in anti-trust legislation to protect everyone and promote fair and free commerce. Those rules and laws apply very much to the way MS has behaved and I don't feel they have been effectively excersized, at all, by the government regulators and law enforcement whose responsibility this lies with. I think they should be strongly and immediately employed to once again send a message, to all, that free and diverse commercial activity is desireable for a healthy capitalist economy and desireable to promote and encourage innovation (so that those who create the good may be rewarded and thus continue to do so). The scope of the harm that has already been done to so many companies can only be guessed but is larger than any of us would probably guess. (the "Its a Wonderful Life" or "Scrooge" effect) Companies, squashed, products stifled or acquired cheap, lives altered, revenues lost, taxes foregone, jobs eliminated before they were even created. That is the cost of the behavior of an organization on an unchecked monopolistic rampage, and that is the price the world has and will continue to pay as long as just and decisive action is withheld.

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